In the Fields of Mansas: The Unofficial Urban Names and Chronological Layers of the Toponyms in the Region of Maunula

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The study examines the unofficial urban names used by the residents of Maunula, a suburban area in Helsinki, the capital of Finland. Moreover, the study touches upon the etymology and sosio-onomastics of the toponyms and their chronological layers. Two different types of surveys were done as part of the study in November 2021. An online survey shared in social media channels of area's local non-profit operatives as well as a paper survey available from public locations around the area were conducted. This resulted in 128 unique unofficial urban names from 102 individual respondents. The survey results are analyzed and compared with prior research to study the onomastic phenomena. Analysis revealed interesting facts about official and unofficial names. In Maunula, the percentages of primary unofficial names and nature-related names are higher than in other urban areas. Among these unofficial names appear some of the most usual onomastic phenomena such as contrastive names, adaptations from other languages, slang suffixes etc. Most of the unofficial names have originated after the rapid development of the area in the 1950s. Some of the nature-related unofficial names also tend to change as the landscape changes over time. Interestingly, the same place might have different names depending on the age of the respondent. Only macronyms have survived over time from factors such as changing landscape. This study shows that in Maunula, which has a lot of unplanned nature areas, official names are unable to fill the need for place names and also that these unofficial names are part of the area's culture and so are a very important part of the regional identity.

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